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MESSAGE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
STAFF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PERSONAL FOR

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OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

PARAPHRASE NOT REQUIRED

FROM: CINCUNC TOKYO JAPAN SCD MACARTHUR

TO: DEPTAR WASH DC

NR: C 53167

10 JAN 51

PERSONAL FOR JCS

Re JCS 80680. Request clarification of your directive in the light of its qualified requirements that I (1) continue to defend in successive positions subject to primary consideration of the safety of my troops and my basic mission of protecting Japan; and (2) that I withdraw from Korea to Japan if in my judgment it becomes evident that evacuation is essential to avoid severe loss of men and materiel.

In view of the self-evident fact that my command as presently constituted is of insufficient strength to hold a position in Korea and simultaneously protect Japan against external assault, strategic dispositions taken in the present situation must be based upon overriding political policy establishing the relativity of American interests in the Far East. There is no doubt but that a beachhead line can be held by our existing forces for a limited time in Korea, but this could not be accomplished without losses. Whether such losses were regarded as "severe" or not would to a certain extent depend upon the connotation one gives the term. The command was committed to the Korean campaign to fight the North Korean invasion Army which in due course was effectively destroyed. It was not the intent that it engage the armies of the Chinese Nation and doubtless it would not have been committed at all had there been foreseeable prospect that it would find it necessary to do so in its own defense. The troops are tired from a long and difficult campaign, embittered by the shameful propaganda which has falsely condemned their courage and fighting qualities in misunderstood retrograde maneuver, and their morale will become a serious threat to their battle efficiency

DA IN 8796

(10 Jan 51)

Army review(s) completed.

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unless the political basis upon which they are asked to trade life for time is clearly delineated, fully understood, and so impelling that the hazards of battle are cheerfully accepted.

As I stated in my C 52391 in reply to urmsg JCS 99935, I am in full agreement with your estimate that the limitations and conditions, viz: No reinforcements, continued restrictions upon Chinese Nationalist military action, no measures permissible against China's continental military potential, and the concentration of China's military force in the Korean-Manchurian sector, eventually will render the military position of the command in Korea untenable. Under these conditions in the absence of overriding political considerations the command should be withdrawn from the Peninsula just as rapidly as it is tactically feasible to do so. On the other hand, if the primary political interest of the United States in the Far East lies in holding a position in Korea and thus pinning down a large segment of the Chinese military potential, the military course is implicit in political policy and we should be prepared to accept whatever casualties result and any attendant hazard to Japan's security.

The issue really boils down to the question of whether or not the United States intends to evacuate Korea and involves a decision of highest national and international importance, far above the competence of a Theater Commander guided largely by incidents affecting the tactical situation developing upon a very limited field of action. Nor is it a decision which should be left to the initiative of enemy action which in effect would be the determining criteria under a reasonable interpretation of your message. My query therefore amounts to this: Is it the present objective of United States political policy to maintain a military position in Korea - indefinitely, for a limited time, or to minimize losses by evacuation as soon as it can be accomplished?

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As I have before pointed out, under the extraordinary limitations and conditions imposed upon the command in Korea its military position is untenable, but it can hold for any length of time up to its complete destruction, if overriding political considerations so dictate. Request your clarification.

Note : C 52391 is CM IN 5452 (30 Dec) JCS

ACTION: JCS

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(10 Jan 51)

DTG: 101215Z

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OCS FORM 331
1 AUG 50

REPLACES DA SCO FORM 22-1,
15 JAN 49, WHICH MAY BE USED

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